

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

OMB-01 SAJ-01 MBFR-03 RSR-01 /110 W

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R 271540Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8272

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL CENTER TRYING TO GET ORGANIZED

SUMMARY: ELEMENTS IN PORTUGAL'S POLITICAL CENTER ARE TAKING STEPS TO PROVIDE A POLITICAL HOME FOR THOSE WHO FEEL THE NATION'S BEST FUTURE COURSE LIES NEITHER WITH GOP NOR TRADITIONAL "DEMOCRATIC" OPPOSITION. LIBERAL DEPUTIES AND OTHERS WILL MEET THIS WEEKEND TO DISCUSS POLITICAL SUBJECTS AND APPROVE STATUTES CALLING FOR FRANKLY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. END SUMMARY

1. AFTER A NUMBER OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, A GROUP OF CENTRISTS DECIDED TO TRY TO ORGANIZE A POLITICAL ASSOCIATION. (PORTUGAL HAS NO PARTIES, AND ONLY POLITICAL ASSOCIATION IS GOVERNMENT'S ANP.) THREE LESSER KNOWN LIBERAL DEPUTIES HAVE OBTAINED PERMISSION FROM THE LISBON GOVERNOR TO HOLD A POLITICAL MEETING JULY 28 AND 29. (REPORTEDLY PERMISSION AUTHORIZED BY PM CAETANO HIMSELF.) MEETING, WHICH WILL INCLUDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABOUT 200 PARTICIPANTS, WILL CONSIDER THEME "PORTUGAL'S

RECENT PAST AND NEAR FUTURE." THREE DEPUTY-ORGANIZERS HAVE ISSUED INVITATION STATING THEY RAN ON ANP TICKET IN 1969 IN BELIEF THEY COULD CONTRIBUTE TO "PLURALISM" IN PORTUGAL (READ POLITICAL PARTIES). INVITATION CALLED FOR DEMOCRATIZATION OF POLITICAL LIFE AND NEW STRUCTURES, WITH HOPE OF AGREEMENT ON GENERAL LINES OF POLICY FOR FUTURE ACTION.

2. LIBERAL DEPUTIES WILL GO INTO MEETING WITH DRAFT STATUTES FOR NEW POLITICAL ASSOCIATION WHICH, THEY SAY, WILL BE A POLITICAL PARTY IN ALL BUT NAME. ORGANIZERS DO NOT EXPECT GROUP TO PRESENT CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THIS YEAR, BUT RATHER TO UNDERTAKE LONG CAMPAIGN OF POLITICIZATION OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WITH A VIEW TO 1977 ELECTIONS.

3. COMMENT AND BACKGROUND: A NUMBER OF PORTUGUESE PROFESSIONALS, CIVIL SERVANTS, INTELLECTUALS, STUDENTS, AND BUSINESSMEN SEE THE GOVERNMENT AS HOPELESSLY STUCK IN THE SALAZARIST SWAMP. AT THE SAME TIME THEY ARE UNEASY WITH THE SHRILL EXTREMES OF THE COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION. THEY HAVE LONG PONDERED DESIRABILITY OF CREATING A CENTRIST POLITICAL BODY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IDEAS AND POLICIES OF THE POLITICAL MAINSTREAM OF WESTERN EUROPE. SUCH PERSONS ARE FOUND IN SEDES (MANY THOUGHT SEDES WOULD FORM THE NUCLEUS OF A CENTRIST PARTY), IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, (ITS "LIBERAL WING"), AND IN THE PROFESSIONS, UNIVERSITIES, AND BUSINESS. IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR THE CENTRISTS FOUND A VOICE IN THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EXPRESSO, DIRECTED BY FRANCISCO PINTO BALSEMAO, A MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY LIBERAL WING, WHO WEEK AFTER WEEK HAS CALLED FOR THE FORMATION OF A CENTRIST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. SHORT NAME FOR THIS MOVEMENT IS "THIRD FORCE" REFERRED TO BY SKEPTICS AS THIRD WEAKNESS. ALTHOUGH EXPRESSO (WITH CIRCULATION OVER 80,000) HAS REPRESENTED CENTRIST POLITICAL THINKING AND CALLED FOR ITS INSTITUTIONALIZATION, NO LEADER HAS EMERGED. THERE IS ADMIRATION IN THE CENTER FOR GENERAL ANTONIO SPINOLA, FORMER DEPUTY FRANCISCO SA CARNEIRO, AND OTHERS. AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, THIRD FORCE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NO LEADER.
POST

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LISBON02791
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973078/aaaaafkp.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Sep-2001 by freemaal>; APPROVED <30-Oct-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL CENTER TRYING TO GET ORGANIZED SUMMARY: ELEMENTS IN PORTUGAL'S POLITICAL CENTER
TAGS: PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005